

Adventure Of the Night fury

by Elohim2800

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Summary: Rayden is new to berk. New to the world of dragons. But when he becomes the apprentice to nineteen year old Hiccup, he is dragged across the world on dragon-back for one of the most important events in history. the training of a second Night Fury. His past may try to stop him. I Will try to be posting one new chapter per week. MAKE SURE TO REVIEW!

## 1. Chapter 1

\*\*\_The Letter\_\*\*

\* \* \*

><p>Fiveâ€| Fourâ€| Threeâ€| Twoâ€| One.</p>

Rayden was knocked out of his bed by a large black forepaw. He fumbled for the battle-axe hanging on the headboard, but he was tangled in his sleeping furs. Then, with a low growl, Toothless the Night Fury pinned him to the wall, opened his mouthâ€|and Rayden was licked so hard he was lifted off the floor. Blasted Hiccup! He thought. Always right. Toothless really does keep perfect time.

By the look of the sun dial on the windowsill, it was 3 hours before noon. Exactly the time when Hiccup had told his dragon to "Get his lazy apprentice out of bed".

Rayden had been apprenticed to him about thirteen months ago now, on account of his skill. Not his skill at smithing, but archery. He hailed from an island clan not much different than Berk. The Apollom clan excelled in archery, and as a bonus, the best archer under the age of twenty was granted one request. Now Rayden's mother had been coaxing him to get a job and saying that he could not make a living of archery, no matter how good he was. But he was good. Very good. He won, without even trying. His mother was right, he needed a job. But most of all, he wanted to spend the rest of his life around the one

thing that fascinated him the most. Dragons. By learning smithing from Hiccup himself, it was a win-win.

Life on Berk had been good for him in the time he had been there. He had been learning everything about dragons, in addition to shaping iron. All in all, he was learning well and it was great. Except for when Hiccup pulled stupid stunts, like having his dragon throwing Rayden across the room. As Toothless flew out of the loft, Rayden quickly got dressed and put on his sheepskin vest. He tousled his jet black hair and straightened his angular jawline. Most of him was angular, making him incredibly handsome, and his ocean blue eyes had spied many of the berkian women giving him some looks and winks. He knew most everyone in the village, they had all made a point to meet him at some time or another, and were a very get-along group. But he knew anyone of them could savagely kill someone as easily as they could say "pass the ale" at the midday meal.

As he slowly walked out of his room he noticed the claw marks on the stairs. He let out an angry huff of breath. Toothless had climbed up the stairs. Again.

"There's a giant flap in the wall for a reason! So you don't ruin my stairs!" he yelled to himself. He absent-mindedly unlatched the front door and began walking toward the mead hall for a quick breakfast.

He heard the distinctive clack of metal on the ground and turned to see Hiccup walking out of his own house a few yards away. He didn't really look like a master smith, small but toned, only nineteen years of age. But hey, he didn't look like a master dragon trainer either.

"I see you're up on time", Hiccup smiled "So I was right you know. Hand over the three silver pieces".

Rayden tried to put on a smug expression.

"Can I forfeit from the bet?" he asked.

"On account of what?"

"On account of all the ale I drank last night!" Rayden said, laughing as he handed over the coins. They continued on to the mead hall. As they walked in, Rayden began searching for food, but Hiccup looked for something else.

"Third table on the left", Rayden whispered to his best friend and teacher.

Rayden was half a head shorter and barely tanned at all. He wasn't quite as strong as Hiccup. But looked stronger, with refined and easily visible muscles. Even though shorter, he had eagle eyes.

Hiccup looked to the third table on the left, and sure enough there sat Astrid, looking more vividly beautiful than ever, her blond locks falling in front of her eyes and her ever present shoulder guards strapped on. Hiccup swayed towards the table as if he had been enchanted. But Rayden had no love life at all, that wasn't his priorities right now. As a normal eighteen year old, right now he

desired food. He quickly grabbed a platter and walked stealthily down the tables, snatching some lamb here, some drumsticks there, without alerting a soul. By the time he got to the table and sat down beside Hiccup, he had a mountain of meat, some vegetables and a tankard of ale.

Hiccup gasped. "Did you just empty the whole serving table"?

Hiccup stared at the sheer amount of food on the plate, and as he did, he never noticed the three silver pieces expertly slipping out of his pocket and back into Rayden's money pouch. But Astrid noticed and directed a cheeky smile at him. He downed half of his ale in one gargantuan quaff of refreshment, and started down on his plate. Only to discover, that every piece of his favorite, charred salmon, was gone. He turned around and saw Toothless, an innocent look on the dragon's face. Toothless opened his mouth to trill at him, and a pile of charred, salivated salmon spilled to the floor from the Night Fury's mouth.

Suddenly Toothless wasn't so innocent looking.

Everyone at the table, most of Hiccup's gang, laughed at the scene before them. An expert thief, beaten in his own game. It was pretty embarrassing for Rayden. But he laughed as well and mock-saluted the dragon, who then allowed Rayden to scratch him under the chin. But he found the pressure point that Hiccup showed him, and Toothless slumped onto the floor. Now it was the giant lizard being laughed at. Seemingly outdone, Toothless mopped up the fish off the floor, which Rayden had no desire to eat anymore. And then the dragon began making strange gurgling noises.

Nobody knew what the dragon was doing. Except for Hiccup, who was trying not to laugh and failing at it. The convulsions grew in tempo and intensity until even Hiccup began to look concerned. At this point everyone in the mead hall was watching. And then, without warning, Toothless regurgitated the biggest piece of salmon he could find in his stomach. Right onto Rayden's lap.

The laughter in the hall sounded more like thunder, and Rayden lowered his head.

"Okay, ya beat me."

He tried to reach and scratch under the dragons chin, but Toothless wasn't falling for it again. Still, he allowed Rayden to pat his head. Then, Toothless began to sniff periodically, as Rayden slipped a small leather pouch bound by some twine out of his sleeve. He waved it in front of the Night Fury enticingly, and threw it out of the mead hall to the cobble stone below. Toothless followed it quickly out the door. The tables had turned again.

"Dragon nip?" Hiccup speculated, and Astrid giggled, magnifying in sound until most of the mead hall was chuckling.

Rayden, with slobber and fish all over his lower body, had no desire to eat anything else. He quietly finished his ale and began cleaning himself as Fishlegs and Hiccup began to discuss the behavior of Toothless.

"Obviously they don't like being outsmarted." said Fishlegs as he

produced his book of dragons and began to write the finding inside it. Hiccup and Rayden pulled out their copies and handed them over. Those were the only three copies, filled with jealously guarded secrets. The three had decided that whenever one of them found out something new about a dragon, he would have the unfortunate pleasure of copying it into all three books. They had already discovered many things such as the behavioral habits of Terrible Terrors in pack and what food made Zippleback gas the most potent.

Snotlout interrupted their chain of thought as he cooed "Hey Astrid, how about a little game of footsie?"

Astrid put on the prettiest face of disgust she could manage and said: "Sure!"

Astrid complied immediately, and there was a huge thump from under the table, as Snotlout fell to the ground clutching his shin, groaning. As he lay there in pain, a green and red Terrible Terror came along and used the body of Snotlout as stepping stones up to the table. He then proceeded to crawl over to Rayden's plate and pick himself a chicken drumstick.

Rayden smiled to himself. Just three days ago, Hiccup had presented him the small dragon. It was fast and loved to retrieve Rayden's arrows for him as he practiced archery. So he had dubbed the little guy "Arrow". Rayden looked sternly at his dragon.

"Arrow. Down." Arrow dropped the drumstick and jumped onto the floor. Rayden tossed him the same piece of meat, which he continued to eat, on the floor where he should be. Hiccup, Astrid and Fishlegs were watching.

Hiccup gasped, "Hey 'Legs, did you just see that? He just made a Terrible Terror drop a piece of chicken. I didn't even know that was possible!"

Rayden sighed. He wished he hadn't made that mistake. As a new addition to the village, he couldn't afford any more attention. But pushing his feelings aside, he explained:

"Ever since I was little, I found everything I ever said to a dragon, they listened and no matter what I tell them to do, they comply. I can't tell them complicated things, no more than a sentence."  
"

Hiccup seemed to mull it over in his mind. If Rayden is telling the truth he could quite possibly become the world's most accomplished dragon rider, he thought. So it was time for the true test. Hiccup looked closely at Rayden and said the one thing he knew was impossible.

"Hey Rayden, tell Arrow to share his chicken with that other terror".

Hiccup pointed across the hall where another Terror, red and orange, was resting on a small Viking boy's lap. Rayden snapped his fingers to draw the attention of his dragon.

"Arrow. Share." He said and pointed to the other terror.

Without even a grunt of complaining, Arrow bit off half of the drumstick and dragged on the piece, which was bigger than him. The tiny dragon half pulled half flew the piece over to the other one and presented it to her. She got up from her owner's lap with a stretch, and affectionately nipped Arrow on the shoulder.

Fishlegs dropped his tankard, which nearly spilt its contents all over the three most valuable books in the archipelago. But he seemed not to notice, and told Hiccup: "We have to do more testing on this! C'mon, Rayden, let's get to the academy!"

They spent the rest of the morning having Rayden give various commands to various dragons. Fishlegs and Hiccup were furiously scrawling notes into their journals. Even though asked several times, Rayden did not reveal his secret. Once though, Hiccup asked the well used question.

"How do you do it? How do you talk to dragons?"

Rayden decided to use the most confusing answer he could think of.

"Dragons."

They momentarily let the matter rest, and decided to be boys. They silently crept through the village, coming up behind the mill. Stoick the vast, chief and Hiccup's father, was helping load sacks of flour onto a Gronckle. There were about five open sacks on each side of the dragon. With Arrow silently perched on his shoulder, Rayden crept up and whispered: "Roll over."

The disaster that ensued afterwards was immense. Most of the village began to prepare for what they thought was a coming snowfall. They ran away, laughing so hard that their sides exploded into ribbons of pain and they had to stop. They slowed to a jog, but kept on moving through the woods, away from the yells of the chief, who hopefully hadn't seen them. Eventually they made it all the way to what Hiccup and Fishlegs called Toothless' cove.

As they were about to climb down the immense wall into the depression itself, Fishlegs excused himself, saying Meatlug needs a meal and a rubdown. As they reached the bottom, Hiccup began to look very distant and sat on a boulder, staring ahead aimlessly.

Trying to break the silence, Rayden asked Hiccup why it was called Toothless' cove. He had never heard Hiccup's story in full, so he was glad to hear it from Hiccup himself. But neither had Rayden hated dragons before they began living with the Vikings. Many times, Rayden had found himself freeing wild dragons from traps, and he always declined an offer to go dragon hunting. So Hiccup told him. He told him everything. It took nearly an hour, and then, his tale finished, Hiccup slumped even lower on the rock.

"That's the third time I've retold the story to anyone. Only you, my father and-".

"Astrid?" Rayden finished the sentence for him. Hiccup brightened slightly at her name.

"Yeah", he said, "she was really the only other one who understood my

feelings at the time."

Rayden smiled and then pricked his ears at a fast approaching flapping noise. He hushed Hiccup and closed his eyesâ€œ Nadder wing beats.

"Speaking of Astridâ€œ! She soon came into view and Stormfly quickly landed, forgoing all comfort.

The ground thundered as the dragon touched down, but her rider was already dismounting. Her voice was strained and urgent but she was smiling ear to ear.

"Hiccup. Rayden. The chief wants everybody from the academy to meet him there as soon as possible."

"What is it?" Hiccup asked, but she shook her head, still looking happy.

"Wait for your dad to tell you."

Rayden suddenly yelled at the top of his voice, a wordless cry for help. After a moment, a roar burst the silence and a Nightmare burst into the clearing. A wild one. "Stop", he commanded, and the beast allowed Rayden to climb aboard, Arrow moving his perch to Rayden's lap and wrapping his tail around the other dragons' neck for support.

"Let's go!" He said to the couple on the ground.

Astrid went towards Stormfly and Hiccup began to walk towards the Nightmare, his hand outstretched. But Rayden was already shaking his head. He winked and gestured toward Astrid. Hiccup put his thumbs up and mouthed "thanks" before quickening his pace in the other direction. He climbed up behind Astrid and put his arm around her. Hiccup was loving this moment, and so was Astrid, though she wasn't about to say that. They quickly flew to the academy without exchanging any words.

As they landed outside the academy, Rayden procured a fish from the feeding barrel near the door. Presenting it to the Nightmare, he fed it and then released it. Then they walked in with Arrow hovering above his owners head, and were greeted by the rest of the gang, as well as Gobber and Stoick.

Stoick was staring needles through the trio, especially Hiccup. Rayden thought for sure he had discovered their prank. But no time to think up an explanation, Stoick was already speaking

"A message, carried by trader Johann has been brought to my attention. It is addressed to Hiccup. The chief handed over a scroll and Hiccup unfurled the paper with anticipation. He began to read aloud.

"It's signed by the village elder of Blood's Peak, never heard of it". He began read the note again, with a louder voice "We need your help, Dragon trainer. For the past few weeks, we have been terrorized by an elusive dragon. It has slain or escaped all of our best warriors. We need you to help us, or this beast will become our bane. Only one warrior has survived an encounter with the monster, and his

words sunk to my bones. It is a..."

Hiccup stopped and dropped the scroll, a strange expression on his face. It was complete shock. Rayden picked up the scroll from the cold, stone floor and read it. The dragonâ€|is a Night Fury.

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><p><span><strong>That's the first chapter guys! please review and I will be posting more chapters. Thanks To Revanhun for being my awesome editor! everybody go check out his work! <strong>

\*\*Any criticism, suggestions or just questions are fine. just throw them in the review box, which I check every few hours. You will not go unanswered. Remember, you don't need an account to review, just enter any name you wish. So review!\*\*

## 2. Chapter 2

Chapter Two

\* \* \*

><p>As Hiccup ran off to get Toothless, everyone broke into quiet conversation. Well, except for Gobber and Stoick. Nothing they ever said seemed to be quiet. Snotlout, Ruff and Tuff started chanting.</p>

"Field trip! Field trip! Field trip!"

Though it looked like that was not the plan. Stoick yelled, "All right you lot, we don't know where this is or how to get there. No decisions are being made until we consider everything. Dismissed!"

Everyone got on their dragons and flew off except for Astrid who was talking to the chief.

"You know he's going, no matter what you tell him. You should just—" Stoick interrupted her with his booming voice.

"I just said no exact decisions, until we consider everything. I'm going to speak with Hiccup about this. And I am sure you're right. He'll want to go, no matter what I say."

Rayden, already having dismissed the nightmare, had to get back to the great hall on foot. During the walk he had a lot to think about. He was wondering what would happen if they'd really find another Night Fury. Hopefully he would get to come along. He pondered this on the whole walk there. Most likely they would fly there on dragons, but Rayden had no idea how far away it was, and if it is a long journey, they would have to use a ship if more than a few people were going, the dragons couldn't possibly carry enough food for a large group.

When he got to the great hall two Vikings with their battleaxes guarded the door.

"This meeting is for dragon trainers only!" one said.

Rayden almost face palmed. He undid his sheepskin vest and gestured to the leather riding outfit underneath it, while Arrow promptly landed on his shoulders and let out the biggest roar he could muster, which was more like a squeak. The warriors barring the way stepped aside with muttered apologies. Arrow breathed smoke into one of their faces and Rayden had to resist the urge to laugh.

When he saw the chief, Astrid and Hiccup in a debate, he walked towards them. Stoick stabbed the table with his dagger. No, not the table, the map that was on the table.

He asked Hiccup, "What's going on?" Hiccup gestured to the map.

"The trip would last around a monthâ€œ! On dragon-back". He let them all ponder the last two words. Rayden glanced at the map and sure enough, their destination was weeks away, even on their dragons. True to his word, Stoick was considering the details, shooting out questions in rapid succession.

"What will you get for food? Who will run the forge, and WHO is going to run the academy? You know that you have duties that need attending to!"

Hiccup was being overloaded, and the verbal assault did not appear to be letting up. Rayden smiled and was contemplating dragging up a chair to watch. While Rayden looked on, Astrid spoke over the din until it quieted enough for her to talk at a normal volume.

"I don't think that you actually want to keep him from going, do you? Chief... Stoick... You know how big this is."

She grabbed his large, muscular arm and attempted to pull him away for a private conversation, though his large frame did not budge until he consented. As the two vacated the premises and moved across the room, Hiccup started to regain his vocabulary. Turning to speak with Rayden, he said what was on both of their minds.

"Astrid will convince him."

"You know she will. She is some woman, isn't she?"

Hiccup may have taken the hint, but he didn't show it. Meanwhile, Astrid was talking some sense into Stoick.

"You're just arguing for arguments sake now. Everything you mentioned can be resolved. The dragons can carry all our supplies, and if you think that Gobber can't handle himself in the forge then I'm a Whispering Death with no teeth! Think about it! This is the biggest thing for him since Toothless himself! Just tell him he can go, he'll hand the academy to Fishlegs and I'll threaten Snotlout to behave. Then we can be off."

Stoick finally saw sense. Nothing but fatherly instincts kept his decision from being made. They turned and walked back to Rayden and Hiccup. Stoick coughed, and spoke in a firm tone to his son.

"You'll have to take at least three people..."

"You're letting me go?"

"Wouldn't matter either way, would it?"

"I'll take Astrid, and Hilda. There are sure to be wounded."

Astrid spoke the next sentence for him.

"And the fourth-", she said, turning to Rayden, "- is you."

Rayden grinned and pumped his fist in the air.

"I'll go pack!"

He turned and raced out of the hall. As he rounded the corner and reached the door he realized that there were still two battleaxes crossed over the threshold. He couldn't stop in time, so he slid under them and rolled back onto his feet to keep speeding towards his home. He unlatched the door and slid inside, out of the frigid air. He owned only about a week and a halves worth of clothes and a second vest. Taking a bedroll out of his closet and grabbing some extra sleeping furs, he arranged it all and rolled it inside his bedroll.

Going back outside with a molded leather saddle designed for comfort, and a Deadly Nadder, he knelt and began to croon into the afternoon air. It was not a forced command, yelled into the forest like he had earlier, but a gentle plea of assistance. Soon after his voice carried on the wind, a Nadder came from the general direction of the coastline and landed in front of him. He complied by feeding it the Icelandic cod he had brought, and began to saddle the bluish red dragon. It took nearly ten minutes to readjust the straps and a further ten to apply it. He tucked his bedroll, now protecting all of his travel attire, into the saddlebag.

He went back inside and acquired his bow off the wall. He also strapped his dual scabbard to his belt. It held his saxe, a heavy, tough knife designed for all manner of use, and perfectly balanced for throwing. Also inside was his throwing knife, smaller but still reasonably durable. He was proficient with these weapons as well as his bow, having familiarized himself with them since childhood.

His arrow making kit was tucked away with his clothes, and his large quiver held three dozen arrows. He strapped these on to his back, but kept his bow unstrung. He had a special addition to the saddle to hold it whether it was strung or unstrung, and there was a flap on his quiver to prevent any of the incredibly sharp projectiles from escaping if he did a violent maneuver on a dragon. Said flap closed, and bow fastened securely to his seat, his new friend took off and carried him to Hiccups house.

Hiccup was outside hurriedly packing his own items. Rayden noticed four moderately sized packages being arranged on Toothless. It seemed fairly awkward on the black dragon, who looked overladen with food supplies already.

"Here, I'll carry those", Rayden suggested, so Hiccup gratefully handed them over to Rayden, who put them adjacent to his bow.

"Thanks, Rayden."

"What are they anyway?"

"Canvass tents I got from trader Johann. Right before he left, too. I need you to go get Astrid. You and she can get Hilda, the physician. I have to talk to my dad. "

"Alright."

Without further prompting, Rayden climbed onto his Nadder and flew towards Astrid's house. The air was cold around him, but the Dragon's natural heat helped. He noticed the moisture in the air and wondered if the rain's about to fall. Since the defeat of the Dragon Queen a few years past, nobody had used Dragons as transport to leave the Archipelago yet. His thoughts were driven back to the sure to be coming precipitation; Rayden speculated that they might need to stop on an island for a night before they make it out of the vast sea.

The Nadder landing with a tooth-jarring thud, Rayden slid down and knocked on the door, but on his second knock the door swung on its hinges, ajar. Rayden walked in to see Astrid furiously eating a leg of mutton. She stopped and started to eat slower and more dignified when he walked in. She swallowed the last mouthful.

"Sorry, I'm all packed, but I had to walk my brother over to Phlegma's house. Let's go get Hilda."

Rayden escorted her outside and latched the door behind him. Stormfly and his own helpful companion were greeting each other. Arrow, having flown off after the meeting, decided to grace them with his presence and perched squarely on Astrid's shoulder guard. He snorted, and sneezed out a puff of cinders. He's been eating starfish again. Rayden sighed. The little lizard had a soft spot for them but they frequently gave him sniffles.

That aside, Rayden and Astrid began the short walk to the med clinic. Flight was pretty much unnecessary. They made small talk and such, but didn't broach the subject of the upcoming journey.

The medicine hut was located near the harbor, so that any warriors returning home could get quick attention. Also, it was an old wives' tale that sea air helped to fight illnesses. As they came upon it the door, it opened and a small girl walked out with a bandage wrapped around her foot. She was ushered by an old woman. Hilda certainly looked ancient, but she was tall and healthy with a straight back. Astrid waved at her while the aged woman scolded the small girl. Hilda then turned to Astrid.

"You wouldn't believe how many children come to me for help because they refuse to do something as simple as putting something on their feet!"

"I still remember when I was like that." Astrid smirked.

"So what do you need, dearie?"

While Astrid explained the situation, Rayden peered over Hilda's shoulder to peek inside the clinic. There were a few rows of cots for sick people, all currently unused. Shelves upon shelves of books and

herbs lined the far wall, and a stairway led to the second floor. Meanwhile Hilda was giving Astrid an incredulous look.

"My old bones couldn't handle half of a journey like that. I cannot accompany you. But I will send my apprentice. She learns well, there is nothing I think she cannot handle when you get to Blood's Peak."

Hilda turned and walked halfway across the clinic while Rayden and Astrid followed her inside to stand on the doormat. Hilda raised her voice towards the ceiling.

"Freya! I have another task for you!"

A feminine voice drifted back down.

"Coming!"

Freya came down the stairs and Rayden's jaw dropped. Somewhere in the back of his mind he heard it striking the floor. She was dazzling, slim and beautiful. Lightly tanned and looking to be about his age, she was a few inches taller. Wearing almost exactly the same garb as Astrid, without bulky shoulder guards, and auburn hair cascaded down past her shoulders. While his mind was currently in overload, Astrid once again took over negations while he smiled at Freya, who was listening intently and excitedly to the list of items she would need.

Once Astrid had dragged Rayden out and onto the street, she went on to get Hiccup. They were leaving soon. Rayden was content to walk to the docks where they would meet, while above him, his Nadder flew riderlessly. It took him about fifteen minutes to get there, stopping by the bakery on the way there.

He walked onto the docks, feasting on the last of his bread and cheese, when he heard voices from behind the dock house. He instinctively lightened his steps and peered around the corner. It was a teenage girl of middle height and stature, with a Zippleback standing behind her. She held Freya in a tight embrace.

The two continued for another few seconds and then Freya pulled back. The girl slowly turned and walked away, the Zippleback following her. Freya knelt to pick up her bag and Rayden realized she was about to turn his way. He slipped out of view as quickly as he could. She walked around the corner and nearly ran right into him. They were both about to apologize when Hiccup, Astrid and his Nadder landed next to them. The sheer amount of wind from the three landing dragons ripped the air from their lungs. Freya stepped back to a normal distance away from Rayden. Hiccup showed them his entire crooked grin.

"C'mon! Before my dad changes his mind!"

Astrid helped Freya climb onto Stormfly, who was now fitted with a large saddle not unlike Rayden's. Molded, padded leather designed for comfort. Toothless was fitted with his normal saddle, which seemed already comfortable enough for Hiccup. Rayden climbed onto his dragon and they took off, riding the thermals high into the air.

As they circled lazily Hiccup studied his map and his new compass

that he had made three days past. Once he had found the proper bearing they began flying on the course Toothless set, with him leading a v-formation and Rayden on the left. While they steadily made distance and the shoreline of Berk slowly became a hazy line in the distance, Rayden became lost in thought.

As the minutes grew into an hour the sky slowly darkened. It was late afternoon, and soon it would be dark. Hiccup brought a map, not a star chart. They have to stop for the night on one of the islands. That fact became apparent to everyone, and Toothless lead the way to the nearest isle.

It was perfect for a campsite. The island was fairly large, and there was a series of cliffs near the middle. They chose one large cliff with a cave situated to one side. While Hiccup and Toothless checked inside the cave, Astrid and Freya began to build a fire pit with some rocks and dig out some food. Rayden, wanting to be useful, flew down on his Nadder and came back with several branches and logs in his arms and in his dragon's jaws. They quickly had a cheery fire roaring and the smell of savoury mutton stew was wafting through the air. Once it had simmered long enough, it was served in wooden bowls with spoons also carved from wood. Astrid sat close to Hiccup and Rayden was on the other side of the fire. Freya sat in between, quietly eating.

It was all quiet until a sound came out of nowhere. What Rayden they thought might have been a Thunderdrum's mating call, was actually Hiccup burping after he slipped his last spoonful of stew into his mouth. They all shared a laugh, some of the tension vanishing. After they thoroughly discussed the burping habits of Gobber too, Hiccup taught them how to set up their tents, and they soon had all four side by side. As the fire died down Freya and Astrid retired to their respective tent. Hiccup sat by the fire, spreading out the coals and letting it die down. Rayden retrieved an unused log and propped it up against the cliff face. The feel of his weapons were part of him, he had practiced with them every day for the past six years. Hiccup walked over and watched as Rayden pulled his throwing knife out of its dual scabbard it shared with his saxe. Hiccup opened his mouth enquiringly:

"That knife is too small to do anything practical."

"You'd be surprised."

Rayden flung his hand up and then forward in a blur of motion, sending the knife spinning into the log, about six metres away. Hiccup stared in awe.

"How did you do that?"

"It's a throwing knife. My father forged it for me, along with my saxe."

"Your father? Did he teach you?"

Rayden dwelled on the question for a moment, then answered:

"Yeah... More or less."

Hiccup thought Rayden would continue, but he did not. Hiccup

continued the conversation

"Teach me!"

Rayden retrieved his blade and began schooling Hiccup on how to hold it and how to throw it. Hiccup had an inventors mind, and grasped the concept well, listening with rapt attention, occasionally asking questions.

"So how do I make it hit blade first?"

"You control the spin of the knife by how you hold the blade before the throw. Closer to the tip and the blade spins faster. Closer targets and you spin the blade fewer times. It's a matter of instinct. You have to train your mind to know how to hold it and hit blade first. Then you start to worry about accuracy."

He handed Hiccup the knife and he threw it. It was pretty good for his first try. It hit the log blade first and held fast, but it was so slanted, had the log been a few inches farther away it would have bounced off harmlessly. Rayden knew that since Hiccup hit it the first try he would be filled with enthusiasm.

"Can I borrow your knife for the night?"

"Sure. Keep practicing. And remember, worry about the spin. Not the accuracy. That bit comes later."

"Thanks!"

Leaving Hiccup to his practice, he strolled into the cave where the dragons were asleep. He quietly pulled his bedroll and sleeping furs out of his bag and made his way back out to the campsite, where Hiccup was retrieving the knife from the ground and muttering. Rayden decided to bolster his spirits.

"You're doing better than I did when I first started. Don't give up."

It worked, and Hiccup's enthusiasm returned. Rayden crawled into his tent and found out that he has plenty of room. The floor was just as big as the surface area of his bed, and he had no trouble arranging his bedroll and crawling in. He let his thoughts wander away as he slowly fell asleep.

\* \* \*

><p><span><strong>Any suggestions, corrections or questions? Review! since its march break I will be able to work a bit quicker than normal. Chapter 3 will be added within the next few days! But seriously, review please!</strong>

### 3. Chapter 3

\_\*\*Chapter Three\*\*\_

\* \* \*

><p>The sun shone on the canvas tents, and eventually Rayden was

roused out of his sleep. There was a soft hand on his shoulder. He didn't care, he was tired. But the hand kept shaking him. Begrudgingly, he opened his eyes. He twisted in his sleeping furs. Freya realized he was awake and she lifted her lingering hand off of his shoulder.<p>

"Hiccup told me to wake you up. We're leaving in an hour."

"Thanks."

She left the tent and Rayden slowly tried to shape his hair into an acceptable position. While packing up, his thoughts were about Hiccup. Hopefully he'd found some luck with the throwing knife. It seemed like he had. When Rayden peeked out of his tent, Hiccup was just retrieving the weapon from the log, which was peppered with holes. Grinning, Rayden retreated back inside his tent and strapped on his scabbard. Taking his saxe in one hand, he slipped outside, tossed the saxe into the air, and caught it by the blade. He threw as hard as he could, and the log was cleaved in two by the heavy knife. Hiccup glared at him.

"I was trying for three in a row!"

"Only three?"

"I just started last night! I'll practice till I get it right!"

"No. Practice until you don't get it wrong."

Hiccup went searching for another target, while Rayden began to pack his things. Freya slipped out of Astrid's tent, apparently having woken her as well. It didn't take long for Rayden to put his things in the saddlebag of his dragon. Then he dismantled his tent, practicing extra care with the canvas. After it was rolled up and put inside its bag, he took his knife back from Hiccup and examined the edges. Satisfied with the result, he sheathed it.

Toothless and Hiccup flew off and returned a few minutes later with a dragon-mouthful of fish. The dragons stuffed themselves full before they left, but they all snapped up a few more fish just in case. Once they get to the mainland they will be able to hunt plenty of stags to feed themselves. Rayden had only seen deer a few times, and it dawned on him that the others probably hadn't seen any. He was sure there were none on Berk.

They had only been on the saddle for about an hour, and Rayden wasn't very optimistic. The wind was constant and strong, trying to blow them off course. At first it was almost nonexistent and the trio of dragons had been showing off with feats of aerial stunts, Toothless easily winning with a double backflip while simultaneously spinning. But then the wind came, and they had to concentrate to keep towards the right direction. They kept the struggle up for another few hours, occasionally flying over small islands, until the biggest island yet was underneath them. They were debating whether or not to land, but all of them knew they would have to. The storm was escalating rapidly. There was yet to be rain, though soon the gales would be so strong they would force even Toothless into the seas.

It took nearly half-an-hour to locate an ideal campsite. A huge

fallen redwood closed one side of the small clearing, and two of the four sides were thick with trees. The last side gave an unprecedented view of the ocean and its roiling waves. The dragons were exhausted and did not complain as the four travelers unpacked. They unsaddled the dragons so that they could sleep comfortably. The saddles were stowed under the fallen tree to keep them dry in the event of rain. Freya, Astrid and Hiccup were setting up their tents, but Rayden merely draped his canvass in the branches of a tree and sat under them. He was going to keep watch. The others tried to convince him to sleep but he didn't want to. Their safety was more important. There could be aggressive dragons on this isle, emotionally scarred from Viking encounters. It was a long shot to say there could be Berserkers or Outcasts, but Rayden thought it is better to be on the safe side.

Well into the night, Rayden was leaning against a tree staring into the darkness. He was keeping his gaze away from the fire to preserve his night vision. A rustle behind him signalled one of the tents' opening. He didn't speak, just kept a hold of his bow. It was draped across his lap with an arrow on the string. He assumed whoever it was had come out to get a drink or go to relieve themselves, so he was surprised when a warm blanket was draped over him and he turned to see Freya settling down beside him.

"Thanks for keeping watch. I'm not lying when I say I feel more secure. I've seen what you can do with those knives."

Rayden lifted his bow a few inches and smirked.

"I have this, too."

"Are you good at it?"

"See that tree near the beach? The one with the big knot in it?"

Freya couldn't see it, but she eventually made out the maple tree with the oddly shaped knoll in it, after her night vision improved.

"I see it. It's at least thirty steps away! You can't hit that!" She taunted him.

Rayden shrugged off the blanket and rose into a half crouch. He raised his bow, drew, aimed and released all in one languid, smooth movement. The arrow sailed true. Straight into the middle of the knot.

"Wow!"

Rayden was glad he had impressed her. Though his curiosity overpowered him and he was forced to ask what was on his mind:

"Do you miss her?"

He settled back into his blankets as Freya's face took a downcast expression. So he saw, she noted.

"My sister you mean?"

"Yeah."

"More than you can imagine ."

Rayden didn't know how to continue the conversation.

Freya looked like she was at the verge of tears, and then she became expressionless. Yet Rayden could notice a touch of sadness.

"She didn't want to say goodbye. I just got back from a trip to another island that mass produces thyme. It helps withâ€!"

"â€| reducing fever?" Rayden finished for her.

"Yes. Only I was gone for over two weeks. Now I had to leave again. It didn't make her happy. She thought I didn't want to be around her."

"Do you?"

"Of course I do! But I told her that the help of any sick and injured were more important than anything else, and she took it better than I thought she would..."

"So here we are. You sacrificed a lot to come and help those people. You made the right choice."

He reached out a hand and took hers in an attempt to comfort her. It worked. She looked into his blue eyes and smiled.

"I guess it was."

Hiccup chose that moment to come out of his tent and ruin their mood. He noticed the intertwined hands but made no mention as they quickly separated with no small amount of blushing. Hiccup had come to relieve Rayden of his watch. Toothless had woken as well, and playfully but half-heartedly took a swing at Rayden. The poor drake was still tired, and soon settled back down into a restful sleep beside Hiccup. Rayden unstrung his bow and slumped against the tree beside Freya, and was asleep in moments.

Rayden was still beside her when he woke up, and boasted a sore shoulder from where it had frequently rubbed against hers throughout the night. She was rubbing at a similar ache. Astrid and Hiccup were already packing. Rayden and Freya hurried to do the same, and then Rayden claimed he will head out to hunt for some rabbit, maybe even a deer. If there were any on this island. Freya happily decided to accompany him. She wasn't as quiet as Rayden, stalking along with his bow in his left hand and an arrow in his right. But she wasn't so loud as to jeopardize his chances of a catch.

After around half of a kilometre of walking, they stumbled upon a clearing with a few deer were grazing. By sheer luck they didn't alert one and soon he had singled out a small doe with a pronounced limp in her left foreleg. A well placed shot took her in the heart and she dropped. The rest of the group scattered. After he skinned it and took the choice meats they left the rest for the predators. The walk back was uneventful, though Freya seemed to be very happy to spend some time with him.

After they returned Hiccup was again practicing with the throwing knife, which Rayden had lent him. He was coming along well; his technique was showing signs of development. He could almost hit mostly blade first now, but he couldn't rush it at all, or else he failed. Astrid was carving a piece of wood into a crude decryption of a Night Fury. Hiccup stoked the fire and went to the beach, grabbing a few smooth, flat stones. He set these on the coals for a makeshift frying pan. Some of the meat was cut into strips and fried while he boiled the rest into a stew, with a dash of spices from Hiccup's provisions. The large pot strapped on Toothless was bulky, but definitely worthwhile. After tasting the first bits, everyone, even Hiccup himself agreed that he was a good cook. They all laughed and enjoyed their meal.

Spirits had risen, and soon they were all talking as if they were still in the great hall for the morning meal. The dragons were playing with each other, joyful to be unsaddled and free to play. That is, after Rayden and Hiccup made sure they wouldn't burn down the forest. I can't believe that just yesterday there was a storm on our heels, and now we are all as merry as can be, Rayden thought, and he was sure that his thoughts mirrored what the others were thinking. More than once he found Freya's stormy grey eyes meeting his, and himself smiling back at her with enthusiasm. It was about an hour before noon before they readied to go. If this was the pace to be set to make it to Blood's Peak by their four week deadline, than Rayden could definitely get used to it.

They couldn't believe their luck! An enormous tail-wind had sprung up behind them and it seemed to be pushing them towards their destination. They wouldn't even have to stop again before the mainland, and the force of the wind was so strong the dragons barely flapped at all. They locked their wings and let the winds carry them at great speeds. They were making great time, traveling so fast that just a few hours after midday they could see the mainland in the distance. They were about to leave the lands of the archipelago, two hundred metres away from the beach and everything was fine, until disaster struck.

The new leather added to Astrid's saddle to accommodate Freya was old, and not as strong as it should have been. So it was in danger of snapping as it frayed against Stormfly's scales. Finally, the leather harness broke, the metal buckle still strapped to it. Rayden heard the snap! He turned his head to see the metal buckle strike Freya's temple with the force of a whip. He was close enough to see her eyes roll back and she slid off of the saddle before Astrid could catch her. Rayden stared on in horror as she fell.

Astrid couldn't catch her, and she was about to jump after her, when Rayden flew past her and dived into the water. He saw her slowly sinking to the depths of the bottom. He swam after and grabbed her by the collar of her shirt, then started to drag her up. He was almost out of breath and spots swarmed his vision, but at last, he broke the surface. Gasping for air, he pulled Freya onto his chest to keep he head above water. Rayden started backstroking towards the shore when Toothless was suddenly hovering above them. Rayden yelled out at Hiccup:

"Take her! I can swim there!"

Hiccup nodded and Toothless grabbed Freya's shoulders with his

forepaws and lifted her out of the water. She was flown to the beach and gently set down when Astrid landed next to them. She plugged Freya's nose and breathed air into her mouth, then pushed her stomach in an attempt to force the water out of her body. It worked, and soon Freya was leaning on her side, retching and vomiting water onto the sand beside her.

Rayden was still a few hundred feet from shore, but his concern for Freya and the incoming tide sped him to the shore. Winded, he was walking, waist deep in water, when he was relieved to see that Freya was back on her feet, running towards him. When she got to him she jumped on him, pulling him into a tight embrace, and making them both fall back into the water. When they submerged, water was still draining past her lips when she spoke.

"Thank you."

She planted a tentative kiss on his cheek and hugged him. He returned the hug, and an hour later they were changed and wrapped in blankets by the fire, sipping hot turkey broth, thanks to Toothless, who was considerate enough to not eat all of the fowl that he found. Freya and Rayden sat close together, laughing at each other as they sneezed repeatedly. Eventually, their chills left them and they could only feel the warmth of the fire, and the warmth of each other's company.

Astrid's saddle was reverted to normal size, and the old leather was hung in a tree, providing a new target for Hiccup, who was still faithfully practicing with the throwing knife. Eventually Rayden took back the blade and handed him the saxe knife.

"You're learning really well. I've noticed you hit your mark about five times out of ten, which is amazing for how long you've been practicing. You show a lot of enthusiasm."

"Thanks!"

"Now take the saxe. It's quite a bit heavier, so you can make the knife strike hilt first as well, to stun a target. Stand five metres away, practice for an hour at hitting blade first, and then another hour hitting hilt first. Then move back to seven metres. That's about maximum range for your throws. Eventually you'll be able to throw farther."

Hiccup followed his instructions to the letter and went right to practice.

As Rayden unsaddled his Nadder, Freya crept up on him. Well, tried to say the least. He heard her coming and turned to face her. She huffed.

"I thought I was being quiet!"

"Is that why you're kicking sand all over the place?"

She laughed and moved to help him with the saddle. They worked in silence, glad to be near each other, though glad to admit that, probably not. She seemed to be waiting for him to say something.

"Ummâ€| I'm glad you're still alive."

She laughed and reached forward to touch his arm.

"I have you to thank for that."

"Another second and it would have been Astrid jumping in."

"With those bulky shoulder guards she would've sunk!"

He laughed and they set up their tents next to each other. Then she leaned forward and pecked him on the cheek once again, then smiled at him.

"Goodnight." He crawled into his tent and stayed up for another hour, thinking of her. Then, as darkness fully overtook them, he slowly sunk into sleep.

\* \* \*

><p><strong><span>Chapter Three! In case you were wondering, in my story Berk is situated in the Scandinavian Archipelago, between Finland and Sweden. The Gang's destination is in Northern Africa. Make sure to review to suggest, request, or ask a question! Also, don't forget to check out Revanhun, my editor!<span>\*\*

#### 4. Chapter 4

\_\*\*Chapter Four\*\*\_

\* \* \*

><p>Since Freya's accident she wasn't riding with Astrid anymore, making Rayden's journey much more enjoyable during the past few days of flying. With Freya holding her arms around his waist, it had been pleasing to him for her to be so close. They were still being pushed by the powerful wind that was escorting them, though, it was slowly but surely dying down. When they stopped for the night on the sixth day of flying, they were well ahead of schedule. Hiccup brought their attention to the map, laid out on a rock next to a stream that encompassed part of the camp.<p>

"We crossed the Archipelago and hit mainland here. Now we are around here." he pointed out "Another couple days of flying and we should hit the sea here. Then we have to cross it and keep moving south. According to the charts, we won't have to go far after that."

Rayden was impressed, he couldn't read maps and charts at all, and he trusted Hiccup to keep them on the right course. The day didn't go without a hitch, though. Rayden had tucked the old leather target into his saddlebags for later knife practice. He needed to keep up his skill level, and he hadn't thrown a knife in almost five days, which was unacceptable for him. So, he hung the leather on a sapling that was growing next to the stream.

After a few repeated strikes in the same location near the middle of the target, the weak leather couldn't stand another hit. Rayden's throwing knife went through the target and he swore to himself as it tumbled into the stream. He stomped over to the target trying to

control his self-inflicted rage. Happiness re-entered him as he glanced down and saw the knife being tumbled across the bottom of the stream. He snatched at it, but missed. The current was rolling it across the streambed just out of reach.

He followed it, and the stream spread out until it was just a few inches deep, tumbling through piles of rocks. There was his throwing knife, anchored against a rock, a few metres away. He stepped on rock after rock, making his way out. Then he made his mistake. As he reached for his knife, he stepped onto a rock covered in wet, slimy lichen. He slipped, and reached his right hand in an attempt to catch himself, trapping his wrist in between two sizable rocks. Then as he rolled into the water he heard a vague crack! He hissed in pain as fire burned up his arm. Even the current gently pushing against his wrist sent stabs of pain through him. He staggered up, walking in the water. He didn't care if he got wet anymore. He just wanted his stupid knife back.

A minute later Rayden walked back into camp with his right arm pressed against his side. Every step jostled his wrist, no matter how lightly trod.

"Rayden!"

Freya had seen him walk up to the fire, holding his arm.

"What happened!?"

"I hurt my wrist."

"Well, I can see that. I meant how, you lamebrain!" Freya snapped, angered by the nonchalant answer. She was only concerned, and the brittle reply she had received did not appeal to her.

"I fell."

Apparently that was enough of a good answer, and Freya went to get her supplies. When she got back Rayden was sitting by the fire, being invaded by a dominating throb in his wrist. She held out her hands, and Rayden allowed her to look at it. He shouted indignantly as she rolled it over.

"Hey! That hurts!"

"It's either a major sprain or a minor break." she assessed her examination. "You won't be able to use this hand to lift much for the next few weeks at least to avoid permanent damage to your wrist. Got it?"

Rayden let out a resigned sigh.

"Got it!"

She took a salve and rubbed it on his wrist, then straightened it with a few straight pieces of wood that she cut into the appropriate lengths. She bound the splint in a bandage. The whole process took only a minute, but Rayden was being bothered by something other than the pain. He had no skill at all with his left hand. He couldn't throw his knives or wield them with any consistency. And obviously he had to forget his bow. He needed two hands for that. He couldn't

hunt, he suddenly felt useless. He knew Freya would probably love the opportunity to mother over him, but his pride didn't want him to sink that low.

But she was already hovering around him. She pulled off his boots and socks and set them close to the fire. She ignored his protests that he could do it for himself. Freya helped him take his sodden, wet shirt off and she covered him in warm furs. He thanked her, though it considerably hurt his pride. He sat by the fire, watching it die down and occasionally adding another branch with his left hand.

Hiccup and Astrid had gone flying together, and when they came back they were surprised to see a splint securely fastened on Rayden's wrist. Nobody commented on it, further than asking how it happened. Rayden wasn't in the mood to dwell on it and continued to sulk and tend the fire.

I'm useless, he thought. I can't do anything anymore. I can't fight, I can't lift anything with my good arm, and I can't saddle my dragon. For Thor's sake I can barely even get dressed. Why couldn't it have been my left arm! I could still throw my knives at least!

It had only been three days since he ruined his wrist. It still throbbed at the slightest provocation, a small movement or something brushing against it and it annoyed him. Oh, it annoyed him to no end. Eventually he resigned to his fate and just let Freya take care of him. He hated every moment of it. She helped him pack all of his things, he couldn't get his arm through his shirts without her assistance, and she saddled his dragon for him, too. He remembered the day before when she had scolded him for an hour when he tried to put up his tent by himself. She was off fetching water, so he thought he'd make himself useful in the meantime. In a few moments, she arrived back and saw Rayden using his right hand. Though Rayden stopped using his injured hand to do anything when she told him that should he continue, he might not ever use a bow again. Whether or not she was telling the truth, he would not take that chance.

They were supposed to get to the coast tomorrow to cross another sea. It was all forest and grassland that they had flown over so far, Rayden holding on with his left hand while Freya acted as his right hand. Her left arm was around his waist, and her right hand was holding on where his right hand should've been. She supported them both, and if it wasn't for her he would've fallen off the dragon in the first minutes of flying. But he would never tell anyone that.

They stopped for the night on a grassy hill. It was scenic, with the sun lowering over the hills, a nearby river winding its way along, and even some wild horses. Rayden sat, watching the other riders unsaddle the dragons, who went right to sleep, and he was starting to wonder if they were pushing their mounts to the limit. It would be productive for everyone if they stay here for a day or two, he thought. He would bring it up to the others over supper.

Rayden cooked dinner with Freya's help, who told him that if all went well, he would be able to take off the splint, and just use the heavy bandage. It gladdened him greatly to know he would soon be back to normal. As they served the meal to Astrid and Hiccup, they heard a great commotion in the fields where the dragons had been sleeping. They all left their meal, a warm soup instead of thick stew, on the

ground next to the fire and went to see what was going on.

In the field, the three dragons were sleeping peacefully when a wild Nadder interrupted them. Rayden was relieved to see that his dragon was only play-fighting with the other one, not brawling to the death. The wild dragon seemed to fancy her, and she him. They frolicked around in the fields, careful not to hurt each other with their many spikes and horns.

They went back to the fire and resumed their meal. Rayden was incredibly bored, so he tried to find something to do. He was on the left side of Freya, and the fire right in front of them pretty much ruined their vision. So nobody noticed as Rayden's hand slipped out of Freya's pocket. He looked down at his prize. It was a smooth green scale that he originally thought was a stone. Rayden lifted it up in front of her.

"What's this?"

"Hey! Hands off, sneak thief!"

Rayden laughed as she snatched it away, but her expression was not joyful at all. She glanced in Rayden's direction.

"It's a Zippleback scale."

"Oh."

Astrid and Hiccup both saw hidden meaning in the exchange, but they were wise enough not to mention it. I guess she doesn't want to dwell on it, he realized. The meal soon ended and they decided to stay until Rayden could at least use his injured arm a little bit. They had made plenty of progress, so there was not much of a problem to let their dragons rest for a few days.

The next day passed without many interesting events, but the affection between his Nadder and the wild one was growing substantially. Rayden never intended to keep the dragon, which was the reason why he refrained from naming it. So, after the midday meal, he released the Nadder into the wild. The others had some qualms about it, but as he watched the two fly off into the forest together, he knew he had done the right thing. Besides, he had a day and a half to find a new dragon and make saddle adjustments, if required.

Hiccup and Rayden had gone into the woods together with a few fish they got from the river, with the help of the dragons. They were hoping to find a dragon for him to ride, but even when Rayden yelled into the woods, nothing had shown itself. It was odd that there were no dragons in the vicinity, but hopefully their luck would be out better in the morning. What they didn't know yet was that they would soon need to get a pencil and the dragon books from the bottom of their bags of belongings.

The next morning Rayden was fetching water from the stream when he saw it. Well, not all of it. Up the river a ways, there were trout jumping into the air. Then, as a noticeably sized fish jumped out of the water, a large, blue head came up from the depths and snapped up the trout before slinking back underwater.

"Hiccup! Get down here with Toothless!"

"What for?"

"Fish. Lots of fish."

It took the better part of an hour to plan it all and put it to action. Trout, salmon and bass were laid out in a trail, the first fish half in the water, and the last one half inside Rayden's tent. He calmly waited inside, while Hiccup, Astrid and a concerned Freya cleared the vicinity, instructed to come back in an hour and a half. So time passed little by little, and after like forty minutes he heard it, outside of his tent. Then the bass perched by the opening was suddenly pulled out of view, and the dragon snaked its head into the tent. It was light blue, and rounded, not unlike Toothless, but much more pointed. He slowly offered the last fish to the dragon, a middle sized salmon. The dragon looked at him with large, bright orange eyes. Then it bared three rows of razor sharp, pointy teeth, and pulled itself out of the tent. Rayden heard it slink away and slip back into the river.

Rayden was not the type to give up, and he couldn't swim across an entire sea. So he decided to play a waiting game. He took the salmon and walked down to the river as the sun was high in the sky, beating down on him. He sat by the river and placed the fish on the ground in front of him, and closed his eyes. It was mere minutes until he was rewarded. The blue beast rose out of the water and onto shore. It was slightly smaller than Toothless, but had somewhat the same shape, only it had no front legs, only clawed wings like a Nightmare. It crawled closer to him and he saw on its back another set of wings, folded beside the spikes along its spine. It has four Wings! The lower pair must serve as really good fins, he thought. Its scales were glistening, a distinct and bright blue. But as the dragon drew closer, Rayden's attention was drawn to its menacing claws. He slowly picked up the fish and held it out to the dragon, who slinked ever closerâ€ and took the fish in his jaws and swallowed. Rayden reached forward and the water drake allowed him to touch his snout with the palm of his hand, with no small amount of soft crooning from Rayden. The dragon breathed in his scent. Then did something very much unexpected. It licked Rayden so hard in the chest he was brought off the ground.

When the others returned they found Rayden and his new friend at the camp, while he was attempting to fit the saddle on the dragon with his one good hand. It took a good ten minutes for Hiccup to stop gaping at the amazing creature before he assisted Rayden with the saddle. Then they stepped back and admired their work before Rayden noticed that the dragon no longer had lustrous scales. They seemed to be drying out. He noted it for later, and went about catching more fish for supper. They had no mutton left, and there was no game in the area. So fish it was. At least the dragons enjoyed it, but the riders were no longer fond of it. When the day came to a close and Rayden was crawling into his tent he realized that he would be able to take off his splint tomorrow. He fell asleep with a smile on his face.

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><p><span><strong>Make sure to review! Feel free to throw questions, comments or ideas!<strong>

## 5. Chapter 5

### \_Chapter\_\*\*\_ Five\_\*\*

\* \* \*

><p>It was the day after he gained the trust of the new dragon, and Rayden discovered a few things about the previously unknown beast. Like a Cauldron, it was dependent on the water and after a few hours, it showed duller scales and exhaustion hung over it like a fog. Though it soon recovered when it doused itself by flying high into the air and diving into the river. Through examinations of both the dragon's body and the behavior it showed around Stormfly, Hiccup determined it was male. Rayden named him Hydra, and the water drake was soon comfortable around everyone.</p>

The flying pattern of Hydra was intriguing; he used all four of his wings in acrobatic feats that Rayden thought would even rival Toothless. Hydra flapped both of his wings in sync to gain altitude quickly and then he would alternate flaps, his front pair of wings at the top of their arc while the back wings were at their lowest point. By flapping both pairs in separate tandem there was no lull in speed as the down stroke of one set of wings compensated for the opposite upstroke of the other. As such, when he was flying level to the ground, he could outmatch even Toothless for speed, though Toothless excelled in other areas due to his almost fifty feet wingspan. Hydra's wingspan could boast no more than half of that, though his wings made powerful gusts of wind, showing he was still strong and fast, no matter the size of his wings. Once Rayden configured the saddle, he was able to experience his new friend's speed first-hand. The results were terrifying, but he was soon exhilarated and they flew at high speeds through the sky. Sadly, Rayden could not hold on tight enough for long bursts of speed because of his injury. Though, Freya used her skilled hands to remove the splint from his right arm, and he now used only a heavy bandage, to slightly restrict his movements so that he could not jar his wrist too much. Within a week he was supposed to be fully healed, and he could feel strength slowly seeping back into his appendage.

They had been at the same camp for the past five days, and Rayden was itching to leave, in more ways than one. His wrist was aching and it constantly itched no matter how much he scratched it. Even though it was almost as strong as his left arm, it felt and even visibly looked a bit smaller. He began to exercise his wrist by bending it for small intervals and finding average sized rocks, holding them at waist height until it burned. Which, sadly, did not take long. Rayden prided himself for his fitness, and as such, this was unacceptable. The previous night they agreed to leave soon, as they were slowly burning away their time.

It was shortly after lunch when they decided to leave. Normally they would have left much earlier, but after pouring all his attention to charts and maps, Hiccup stated that they did not have much flying to do, and they wanted to stop at the coast before attempting to cross the ocean. It wasn't as wide as the gap they crossed over the Archipelago waters, but they did not know if there were any islands they could rest on.

They flew slower than normal, due to the fact that Toothless and Stormfly were more laden than usual. Hydra could not carry anything that wasn't waterproof, as he often swam in any water they found. He could swim fast, though not nearly as fast as he could fly. Even so, Hydra appeared to love both the sky and the water. Not as much could be said for Freya, who hated the liquid contact. Her grip clamped Rayden in irons every time their mount glided down to a body of water. It wasn't that he didn't enjoy it, and sometimes Hydra dived fully underwater, soaking them both to the bone. Thankfully the water was only mildly cold, and Freya still looked beautiful when her wet hair was plastered to the back of her head and shoulders. The scowl didn't help, though.

They reached the shore a little after suppertime, which they skipped to continue flying. Ironically, there was a village situated on the shore with several docks, that they had sighted not long after Rayden contemplated the fact they had seen no signs of civilization since they left. Toothless let off a signature plasma blast in excitement, but they flew out of its path before any of them were scorched. It seemed to have alerted the village, warning bells tolling. Hiccup let out a heavy sigh. He was hoping to avoid a confrontation.

"Well, hooray. A welcoming committee."

There was a group of warriors coming out in front of the villages, fifteen strong and robust looking men, armed with axes and javelins. As soon as the trio of dragons landed, the squad attempted to circle them, so with unspoken consent the dragons backed up a little, and Hiccup along with Rayden dismounted to calm their scaly companions. Rayden managed to snap Hydra's mouth shut before he let off a blast of fire, plasma, water, he didn't even know. A middle sized man walked forward a few steps, ignoring angry growls. He was probably the only reason why the men simply didn't attack. He had a greying beard that betrayed his younger appearance. A string of words came from his mouth, but nobody understood what he said. Hiccup held back another sigh as Rayden cursed. Negotiations just got a bit harder. Rayden walked closer to the man, a mere six feet away. If he wanted to, the elder warrior could have leaped forward and separated Rayden's head from his shoulders. Rayden spoke a loud and clear question.

"Norse?"

"Aye."

The man leaned on the haft of his axe, glad to be able to question why the four youngsters were on dragons.

"What in the blazes are you doing with dragons? Why aren't they attacking you?"

A few of his group spoke to each other with varying degrees of volume.

"â€|witchcraftâ€|"

"Could be a trick."

Rayden let Hiccup take over from there. He backed up as Hiccup began speaking.

"We trained them."

As Hiccup explained their names, mounts and reasons for passing through, the man introduced himself as Rohan and dismissed all but three of his warriors. One looked to be his brother, and the other two held an air of confidence. Rohan addressed all of them in a calm yet slightly unbelieving tone.

"I'm sure you can stay as long as you like, but I need to make sure your lizards are not meaning harm."

Hiccup was eager to just find a bed, a real, soft bed to fall in, so he was brief.

"You'll need to drop your weapons."

Rohan grounded his axe and the javelin on his back as well as the sword belted on his waist. Heavily equipped, Rayden thought. As Rohan edged closer Toothless let out a huff of flame where his next foot would have fallen. Hiccup had a small amount of annoyance in his tone.

"All of them."

Rohan slowly crouched and pulled the long, jagged, wicked looking knife from his left boot. He tossed it without a backward glance back near his other weapons. Hiccup grabbed his wrist guard and guided his hand to Toothless' snout. After a brief contact Rohan uncomfortably retreated and repeated the process for the other two dragons. Hydra let out a growl during his turn, and Rayden quickly explained.

"I just trained him."

"When?"

"It was only a fortnight ago."

Rohan had no other questions or concerns for the moment. It was a warm night, so he ordered a barn emptied of animals to a fenced in pasture. The barn was given to the dragons, and the loft was given to the riders. Two beds were carried up for them, and Hiccup expressed his gratitude with a thanks and a hearty hand-shake. Rohan claimed it was nothing, as head of the guard he had no troubles making such demands. After Rohan left, Hiccup fell in bed, exhausted. The others were not far behind. Astrid climbed in beside Hiccup and curled close next to him. Rayden drowned himself in the sleeping furs after he checked on Hydra and the others, and he was surprised when Freya copied Astrid, crawling in close beside him. He did not have much to say on the matter, his eyelids were already drooping. But as he fell asleep beside her he could only thing how much better it was than a tent.

The next morning Hiccup went straight to the man in charge to explain everything about dragons.

"Don't wait up, I'll be a while."

Freya went to find the medicine hut to study herbs she had never seen before and to learn anything she could. That left Rayden and Astrid.

They both had already planned to drop by the barracks for some weapons training. Toothless was Hiccup's weapon, and Rayden knew he could protect Freya, though she did have a dagger hidden on her. He wasn't going to use his bow, but he could get some knife practice in now that his wrist was sufficient enough. They met Rohan training some new recruits behind the barracks, a short walk from the barn. There was a competent obstacle course with a balancing log and a rope course among other things. Several pairs of warriors were sparring on the practice field, and there were archery targets, though nobody was throwing knives, Rayden noticed.

He strapped his blades to his belt and began climbing ropes up and down the wooden tower. Two of its sides were climbed by ropes, two on each side. One rope on each side was knotted every foot or so while the other two were smooth. The additional walls were decorated with random handholds. Rayden went right to work climbing up both the knotted and un-knotted ropes for half an hour, then spent the next half climbing the other wall. It was vigorous exercise, and his wrist was burning. He sat on the edge of the field for a breather, observing Astrid go through complicated forms with her axe. Any warrior brave, or foolish enough, to go up against the Viking warrior left with bruises. He took his knives, smaller throwing knife in his left and saxe in his right hand, and stepped in front of her. She raised her eyebrows but said nothing.

"C'mon Astrid, take a swing."

"This axe will shred you!"

"You'd be surprised." Rayden smirked "Now HIT ME!"

Galvanized into action, she took a half-hearted swing at him. He easily sidestepped the blow and laughed. Now, that made her angry. She swung at him hard enough to take his head clean off his shoulders, though not so fast she couldn't turn the axe at the last minute and simply smack him upside the head. The axe stopped and she couldn't believe her eyes. Rayden had crossed his two blades in an X shape, the throwing knife giving the larger knife leverage to stop the axe. Another cheeky grin crossed his face.

"Not impressed!"

An angry frown creased her brow and she swung with more determination. She tried left and right, a cascade of overhands and even underhand blows, executing every maneuver she thought of, but she couldn't break his defense. After a vicious overhand was about to be followed by another, he moved. The axe passed through where he was standing a moment before. Astrid, expecting her blow to be stopped, was caught off balance. As she stumbled forward, Rayden, who had neatly sidestepped, caught the front of her shirt and pulled her close. He laid the saxe across her stomach and wiggled the throwing knife, still in his left hand, in front of her eyes. She stepped back when he released her.

"How did you do that?!" Astrid asked in disbelief

Rayden sat on the ground holding his badly jarred wrist, waiting patiently for the pain to subside, which it eventually did.

"Practice."

"I've never seen anything so amazing! I couldn't get passed you! Not once did it look like I was even trying to-"

"-to cut me in half?"

Astrid took on a shameful expression.

"Sorry."

"No big deal. It was kind of fun"

Rayden moved to a human sized block of wood where sword drills were practiced and began to regain his inhuman accuracy. Time passed and he took no account of it, he was sorely out of practice and placed all of his attention on the small blade in his hand. He threw and threw and threw until he could hit a leaf out of a nearby tree at twenty paces. After consulting a recruit he realized nearly three and a half hours had passed and he missed the midday meal. He kept practicing until Hiccup came and got him.

"I just got out of my meeting with the village elder."

"And?"

"He wants us to stay."

Rayden laughed, but it was more like a cough. He hadn't drunk anything or spoke more than a few words all day.

"Not going to happen."

"I know. That's what I told him. We need to get to Blood's Peak sooner than later."

They made their way towards their barn accommodations, which Hiccup had told him food had been delivered. None of the meat was hot anymore, but it was still food, and Freya was there, Hiccup also told him. So he quickened his steps. They were soon eating and chatting about the village. They spoke Greek, Rohan told him, though Norse was a second language and most of the adults, and the more promising kids, could speak it well. It was a concern of theirs that communication would get difficult along their journey, and languages could not be learned in a day. They decided in the future they would avoid confrontations until they got to their destination. Hopefully they could manage-. His train of thought was interrupted by Hiccup, who was speaking to them.

"The chief had a lot of questions. He and his ancestors had been attacking dragons since the dark ages. They never tried to be friendly."

Astrid piped up with a mouthful of steak still being eviscerated by her jaws and teeth.

"Maybe they didn't notice that the dragons stopped raiding when Hiccup killed the queen."

Freya had a few words to say in the conversation as well, though her

words were not as cheery as anyone else's. Not in the slightest. She sliced through the conversation with her ominous voice.

"Unlessâ€| Unless there's another queen."

Rayden set down his steak and swallowed.

"Hiccup, how big exactly was the queen?"

"It ate a Gronckle..."

"Well that couldn't be too-"

"...without chewing."

The discussion quickly died after that.

It soon became evening, and Hiccup was gone to meet again with the chief, to talk some more and share his knowledge with a choice few individuals. Rayden could've chosen to teach a few recruits the basics of knife throwing, but Freya was staying in the barn, so that was exactly where he wanted to be. He was up in the loft, doing chin ups on a wooden cross-beam, while she was on the ground floor tending to the dragons. She climbed up to see him, shirt on the ground, covered in a thin film of perspiration as he exerted himself. His eyes were closed in his physical efforts, so he didn't notice her until she was tossing a towel over his shoulders when he lowered himself to the floor. He started, turning and dropping into a half crouch, reaching for the saxe on his belt while realizing it was resting on one of the multiple hay bales nearby. Freya giggled and radiantly smiled.

"A bit jumpy, aren't you?"

"I'll show you jumpy!"

He crossed the space in between them almost instantly and playfully shoved her towards the nearest hay pile, but she was already grabbing him and they stumbled into the heap of straw, a jumbled mass of legs, arms and laughter. Rayden knew that in this state it wouldn't be long before their lips found each other's embrace, so they untangled themselves rather quickly. She was blushing and glancing away from him while she fixed her hair. She was nervous, he could tell.

Rayden understood, though the only time he had any real patience was when he had a bow in his hand, tracking a deer. But for Freya he knew he would make himself wait. He had to. As he rose to his feet, hay falling off of him, Freya realized she still didn't want him to leave. But as she reached forward she noticed he was only getting his towel and his shirt, and she regained her composure before he turned back to her. As he sat down beside her and wiped the straw and perspiration off his skin, she noticed a deep, dark black tattoo on his back. Viking tattoos were messy, usually done with a sharp blade and some ink. But this was a detailed, perfect shapeâ€| of the insignia of the Mystery Class. She stretched to trace the tattoo with her finger.

"What's this?"

Instantly, a thousand images flashed through his mind. Lost friends.

A mottled tan and yellow cloak, a bronze oak-leaf on a chain, and the voice of a young woman. The voice spoke inside his head. 'I would never betray youâ€|^' it whispered.

"It's nothing."

He wasn't lying, really. It did have some serious meaning, would probably, no, definitely affect them in the future. But it no longer had any significance to him, it was beneath his concern.

He was going to sleep that night with Freya on the other side of the bed, still trying to convince himself that it didn't matter.

\* \* \*

><p><strong><span>There's Chapter Five, sorry for the wait guys! hope you enjoy, make sure to review, review, review!<span>\*\*

## 6. Update

\_\*\*Hey readers, just a heads up:\*\*\_

\*\*\_I am sorry to inform you guys that this story is discontinued until further notice. I may re-do it after June 13, when HTTYD 2 comes out. My fanfic will most likely still contain Rayden, but I am just as likely to start completely anew. review and give me your suggestions. Would you like Rayden to stay in my story? And, I am only doing this once, but anyone who requests any sort of topic from me, then I will study said topic and then produce a story. So review or message me with requests. Also, check out Revanhun, my editor, and his Astounding HTTYD fanfiction, Ways of Fate.\_\*\*

\*\*\_Thanks!\_\*\*

End  
file.